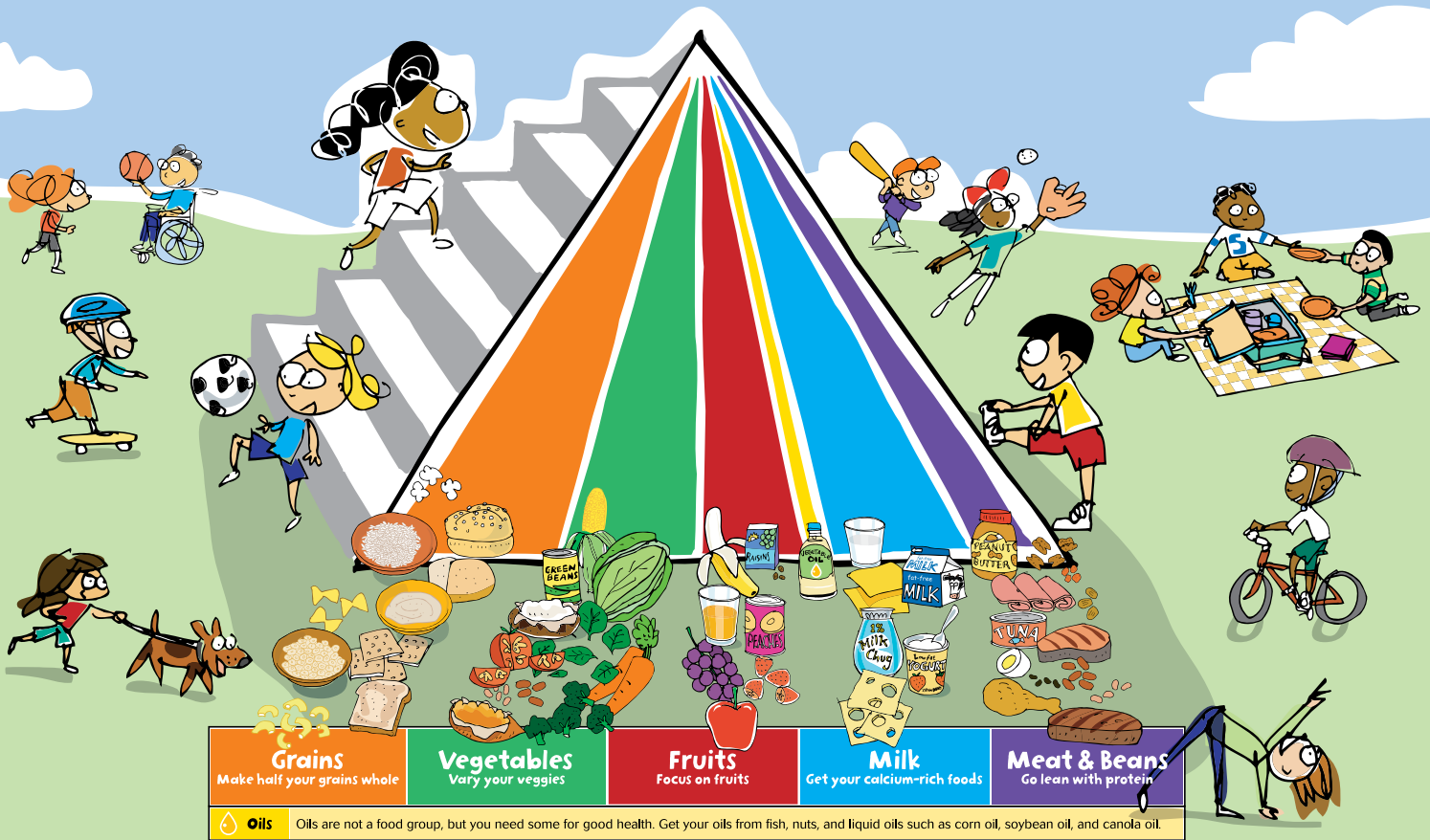


Level 2

# MyPyramid

## FOR KIDS

### Lessons for Grades 3 and 4



Find your balance between food and fun



Fats and sugars — know your limits





**United States Department of Agriculture**

Food and Nutrition Service FNS-385  
September 2005

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Dear Teacher,

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed these lessons to help you teach children in grades 3 and 4 about **MyPyramid**.

- The lessons feature a graphic developed specifically for elementary students titled **MyPyramid for Kids**. They are designed to integrate nutrition with math, language arts, music, and art. Physical activity is also emphasized.

The lessons:

- Communicate nutrition concepts through age-appropriate, fun activities
- Contain handouts to be duplicated
- May be taught with minimal preparation
- Include a link with the school lunch program
- Provide information to send home to parents.

Also included in these lessons are: a **MyPyramid for Kids** poster, 50 **Tips for Families** flyers to send home to parents, a CD ROM with an interactive computer game, and a CD ROM with all the lesson materials and supplemental materials for educators. Your students will have fun as they learn to eat well and be physically active.

Here is a snapshot of what the three lessons cover:

Topic	Objective	Individual Student Activity	Group Activity	Lunchroom Link
MyPyramid for Kids	Students identify the food groups that make up <b>MyPyramid for Kids</b> and learn how much from each food group they should eat.	Students listen as the teacher reads "A Conversation with Pyramid Pal" aloud. During the story, students answer questions on the <b>MyPyramid for Kids</b> handout.	Students create cartoons based on "A Conversation with Pyramid Pal."	Students categorize lunchroom foods according to the food groups in <b>MyPyramid for Kids</b> .
Food Math	Students discuss the importance of eating all the food groups and calculate how much they need to eat from each food group to meet the <b>MyPyramid for Kids</b> recommendations.	Using the <b>Food Math</b> handout, students practice adding and subtracting amounts of food to meet the recommended amount from each food group.	Students create a rap song about the importance of eating all the food groups.	A representative from the school foodservice staff visits the classroom to discuss how they create balanced menus.
Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits	Students learn about the nutritional qualities of vegetables and fruits and set goals to eat more fruits and vegetables.	Using the <b>Steps to a Healthier You</b> handout, students learn about goal-setting as they think about ways to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet.	Students research a dark green or orange vegetable and create an ad campaign for that vegetable. Groups perform their ad for the class.	Students review the cafeteria lunch menu to find the dark green and orange vegetables offered. Students develop signs to advertise these vegetables to other students.

# A Close Look at MyPyramid

For Kids

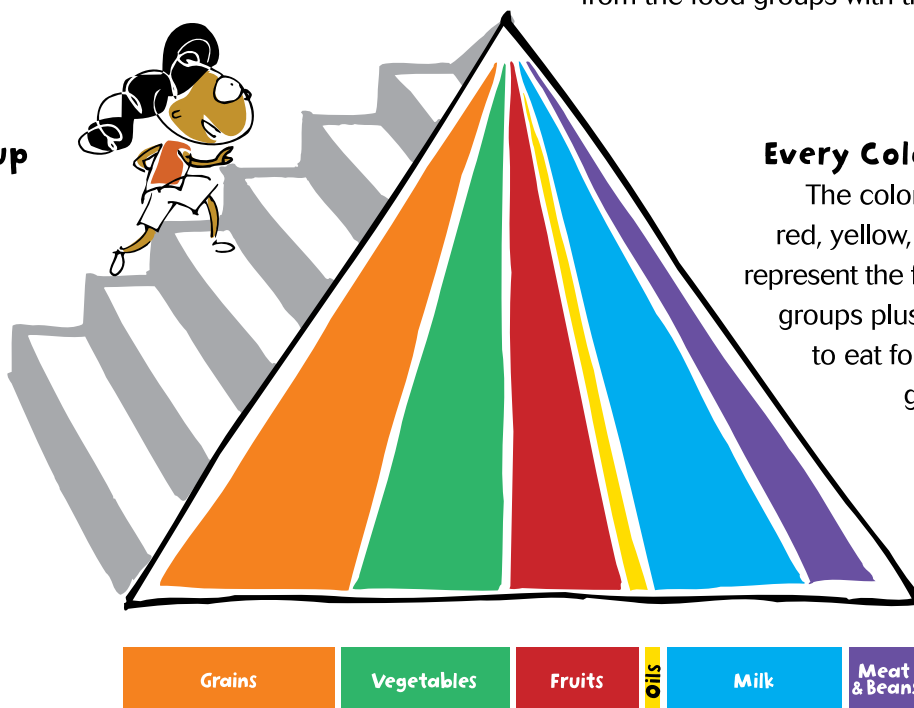
*MyPyramid for Kids* reminds you to be physically active every day, or most days, and to make healthy food choices. Every part of the new symbol has a message for you. Can you figure it out?

## Be Physically Active Every Day

The person climbing the stairs reminds you to do something active every day, like running, walking the dog, playing, swimming, biking, or climbing lots of stairs.

## Choose Healthier Foods From Each Group

Why are the colored stripes wider at the bottom of the pyramid? Every food group has foods that you should eat more often than others; these foods are at the bottom of the pyramid.



## Eat More From Some Food Groups Than Others

Did you notice that some of the color stripes are wider than others? The different sizes remind you to choose more foods from the food groups with the widest stripes.

## Every Color Every Day

The colors orange, green, red, yellow, blue, and purple represent the five different food groups plus oils. Remember to eat foods from all food groups every day.

## Make Choices That Are Right for You

*MyPyramid.gov* is a Web site that will give everyone in the family personal ideas on how to eat better and exercise more.

## Take One Step at a Time

You do not need to change overnight what you eat and how you exercise. Just start with one new, good thing, and add a new one every day.

# Table of Contents

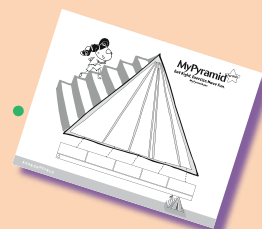
**Lesson 1:** *MyPyramid for Kids*

**Lesson 2:** Food Math

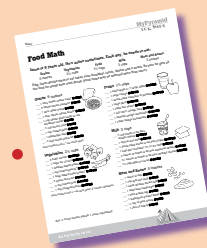
**Lesson 3:** Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits

## Reproducibles:

**Lesson 1** *MyPyramid for Kids*  
Black-and-white handout



**Lesson 2** Food Math



**Lesson 3** Steps to a Healthier You





# Lesson 1:

## *MyPyramid for Kids*

### Lesson Highlights

#### Objectives

##### Students will:

- Identify food groups and how to get the right amount of food from each food group.\*
- Review *MyPyramid for Kids* to learn how they should eat more from some food groups than others.

\**MyPyramid for Kids* poster illustrates an 1,800-calorie diet. Some children may need more or fewer calories. To find the amounts that are right for an individual child, go to [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov).

#### Curriculum Connections:

Language arts, Art

#### Student Skills Developed:

- Listening comprehension
- Writing
- Thinking skills - categorizing

#### Materials Needed:

- *MyPyramid for Kids* classroom poster
- *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout for each student

### Getting Started:

**Hang the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster on the wall so all students can see it.** Pass out the *MyPyramid for Kids* black-and-white handout to each student.

### Activity: A Conversation with Pyramid Pal

This activity introduces students to *MyPyramid for Kids* concepts in a fun way.

Read *A Conversation with Pyramid Pal* aloud. During the story, help students answer the questions based on the teacher's talking points.

### A Conversation with Pyramid Pal

**Pyramid Pal:** Hi. I'm the kid climbing the side of the pyramid on the classroom wall. Did you notice that I'm running up the steps? That's because I've got lots of energy from eating right and exercising a lot. What do you do for exercise? On the steps *(of the black-and-white handout)*, write the ways you stay active.

**Pyramid Pal:** **Let's take a look at the *MyPyramid for Kids* I'm climbing,** it's called *MyPyramid for Kids* because it's just for you.

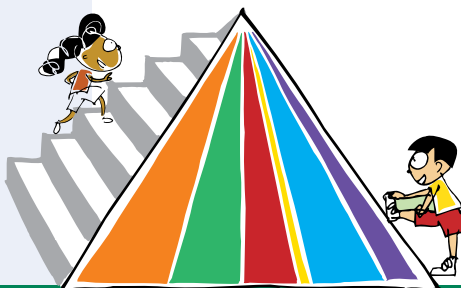
**Pyramid Pal:** **Look at the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster on the wall. Now wave at me. Come on, wave.** If I weren't stuck on this poster, I'd wave back. The poster shows how much food kids our age should eat.

**Pyramid Pal:** **Do you know the food groups?** Do you see the orange stripe next to the steps? That's the grains group! Do you know what grains are?

**Teacher:** Who can name the grain group foods illustrated on the poster? Write the word "grains" in the box under the grain stripe on your handout.

**Pyramid Pal:** **Do you know what whole grains are?**

**Teacher:** Whole wheat products are commonly eaten whole grains. Examples of whole-grain foods include: whole-grain cereal, whole-wheat bread, and oatmeal. Explain that just because a bread is brown, it's not necessarily whole wheat. The only way to tell is to look at the ingredient label. The first ingredient should read "whole wheat."



**Pyramid Pal:** My favorite whole grain is lowfat popcorn! Did you know it actually turns itself inside out when it pops? It's yummy!

**Pyramid Pal:** **The next color stripe is for vegetables.** Some kids don't get enough vegetables. Write the word "vegetables" in the box. It is important to eat dark green and orange vegetables. Come on, name a few.

**Teacher:** *Before reading the examples, let the students name their favorite dark green and orange vegetables.*

**Pyramid Pal:** I like broccoli, carrots, spinach, collard greens, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin.

**Pyramid Pal:** **See the red stripe?** That's for fruits! Write the word "fruits" in the box. I always put a fresh fruit in my backpack, and eat a piece of fruit as a snack every day. Dried, frozen, and canned fruits are great, too. Did you know there is a fruit snack made from dried grapes? Can you name it?

**Teacher:** *Raisins*

**Pyramid Pal:** **The blue stripe is the milk group.** Write the word "milk" in the box. Did you know that foods in this group include more than just the milk we drink? They are foods made from milk. Can you name a few?

**Teacher:** *Yogurt, pudding, cheese. Explain that calcium is important for building strong bones. Students should consume the equivalent of three cups of milk or other calcium-rich foods each day, emphasizing choices that are lower in fat or fat-free.*

**Pyramid Pal:** **The last stripe on the right is meat and beans!** Write those words in the box below the meat and beans group. Meat and beans provide protein, which is important in building muscles.

**Teacher:** *Lean meat, chicken, turkey, fish, nuts, beans, peanut butter, and eggs are all from this group.*

**Pyramid Pal:** **OK. We're done with the food groups.** No, you say? What's that skinny yellow line up there between the fruits and milk? Those are oils. Write the word "oils" in the long box. They are not a food group, but everyone needs some. I get mine from nuts and seeds.

**Teacher:** *Other good sources are fish and liquid oils such as olive, corn, soybean, and canola oil.*



## Lunchroom Link:

Look at the lunch menu for today. Ask students into which food groups each of the items on the menu would fit. You may need to explain mixed foods, like hamburgers and pizza, which fit in several groups. (Pizza = grain, milk, vegetable, meat)



**Pyramid Pal: Why are some of the food groups bigger than others?**

The wider color stripes show that you should eat more foods from those groups and less foods from the groups with the narrower stripes. Put an "X" in each of the three widest food groups. Which groups are the widest?

**Teacher:** Grains, vegetables, milk.

**Teacher:** Students should learn to eat healthier foods more often and foods such as candy, potato chips, or French fries less often. Moderation is represented by the narrowing of each food group from the bottom to top. The wider base stands for foods with little or no solid fats or added sugars. These should be selected more often. The narrower top area stands for foods containing more added sugars and solid fats.

**Pyramid Pal: Now look closer for some MyPyramid for Kids secrets.**

See how each of the color stripes is wider at the base of the pyramid and narrower at the top? That's to remind you (and me, too) that the healthier foods in each group are at the base of the pyramid. Those are foods low in fat and added sugar. We should eat mostly those foods. Can you name some?

**Teacher:** Whole-grain cereal, fruit, vegetables.

**Pyramid Pal: See how the colored stripes are narrow at the top?**

That's for foods that are high in fats and added sugars. These foods are for eating once in a while.



**Pyramid Pal: Here is a Pyramid Pal example.** In the grain group, a slice of whole-wheat bread is a healthy lowfat choice and is at the base of *MyPyramid for Kids*, while a donut is a high-fat and a high-added-sugar choice. I only eat these on special occasions. Then I run up and down the stairs of *MyPyramid for Kids* a bunch of times! Draw a slice of bread at the bottom of the grain group, and a donut at the top.

**Pyramid Pal: Here's another Pyramid Pal example.** In the vegetable group, a baked sweet potato is low in fat and added sugar and great for you any day. But French fries are high in fat. You should eat them only once in a while.

**Pyramid Pal: Thanks, kids.** Hope you enjoyed Pyramid Pal's tour of *MyPyramid for Kids*. I hope your teacher leaves me up here on the wall so you can see me every day.

### Group Activity: Pyramid Pal Cartoons

Have students work in groups to create Pyramid Pal cartoons in which Pyramid Pal gives kids nutrition advice from *MyPyramid for Kids*. Students can use the poster on the wall as background information. Display cartoons around the room or in the lunchroom.

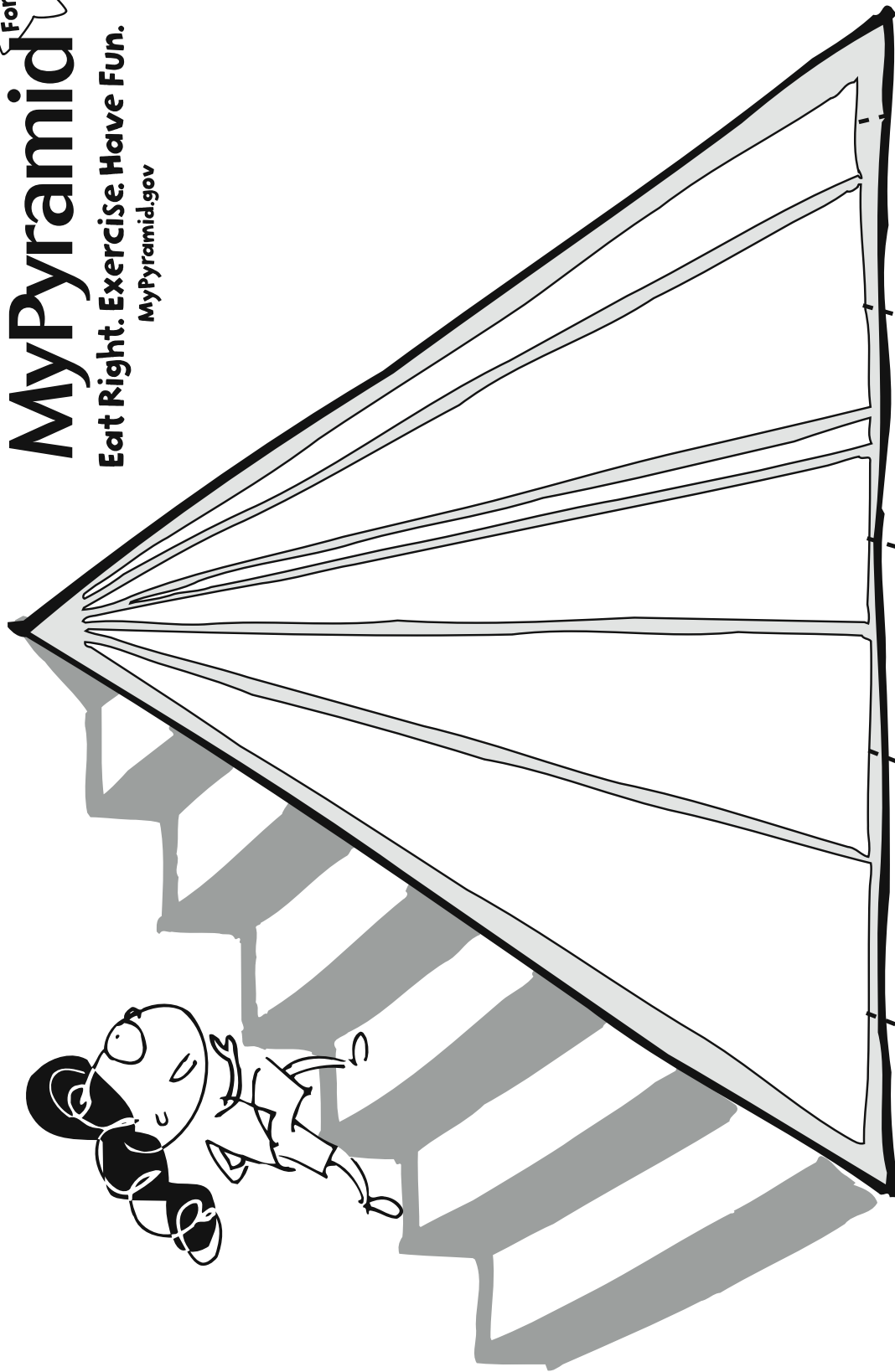
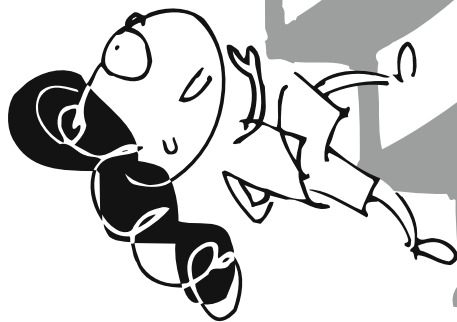


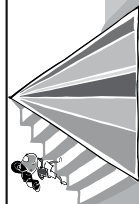


# MyPyramid

Eat Right. Exercise. Have Fun.

MyPyramid.gov





# Lesson 2:

## Food Math

### Lesson Highlights

#### Objective

##### Students will:

- Add and subtract fractions as they calculate how much of various food groups they need to meet the *MyPyramid for Kids* recommendations.
- Create a daily menu based on the *MyPyramid for Kids* recommendations.
- Discuss the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

##### Curriculum Connections:

Math, Language arts, Music

##### Student Skills Developed:

- Math skills – adding and subtracting fractions
- Creative writing
- Song development

##### Materials Needed:

- *Food Math* worksheet for each student
- Paper and pencils to use in creating their day's menu
- (Optional) Glass measuring cup, cut raw fruits or vegetables to fill measuring cup to 1-cup line
- (Optional) Paper plate for the fruits or vegetables.

### Getting Started:

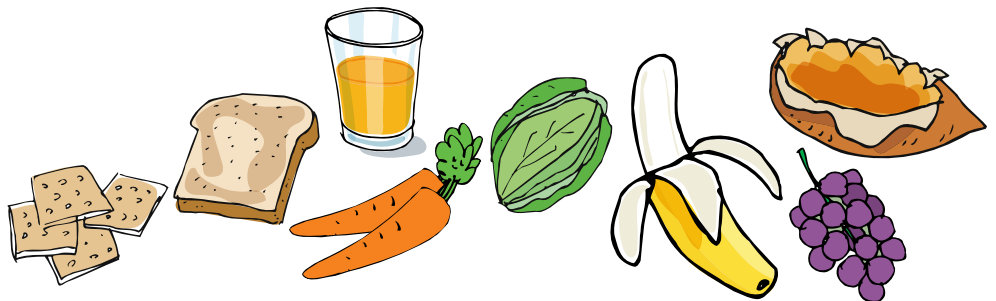
**Have students look at the *MyPyramid for Kids* poster.** Point out that *MyPyramid for Kids* tells how much of each food group to eat; *MyPyramid for Kids* gives the amounts for each day in ounces and cups. Grains and meats are weighed in ounces. For example, a piece of bread is 1 ounce, so is a cup of ready-to-eat breakfast cereal or one small tortilla. A small chicken breast half is 3 ounces. Vegetable, fruit, and milk amounts are given in cups. For example, one small apple, about 12 baby carrots, and an 8-ounce glass of milk count as 1 cup equivalent.

You may want to help students understand what 1 cup of vegetables or fruit looks like. Put food in a measuring cup, then pour out onto a paper plate. Or, mention that a baseball is about the size of 1 cup and a small computer mouse is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.

Ask students to estimate how many fruits and vegetables they eat in a typical day. Point out that most students their age should eat more foods from these food groups. They are high in nutrients.

### Activity: Food Math

- **Have students work in pairs. Hand out the *Food Math* worksheet.** Tell students they are going to choose foods they think would make a healthy menu for a day for Jason. Their menu should include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack.
- **The menu they create must include the right amount of food from all the food groups.** For one day, that would be: 6 ounces of grains,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups of vegetables,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of fruit, 3 cups of milk, and 5 ounces of meat or beans. (This amount of food is based on 1,800 calories, the estimated energy requirement for a moderately active 9- to 10-year-old.) Before students begin work, review each of the food groups and the amounts needed.



- **Have them write their menu on a sheet of paper** including the amount of food for each entry and the totals for each group along the bottom of the sheet.
- **Discuss students' choices and have them check their math.** Also have students check to see whether half their choices from the grain group are whole grains. Did they choose any dark green or orange vegetables?

*(Note to teacher: Food Math will help prepare students to play the MyPyramid Blast-Off game on the enclosed CD ROM.)*

### **Group Activity: Be Hip-Hop Healthy**

Divide students into groups. Have each group write a rap (at least eight lines long) about the importance of eating from all the food groups. Have the group come up with movements that go along with their rap. Groups should perform their raps for the entire class. Then post a written copy of the rap on your bulletin board. (To help the students get started, you can use the Power Panther™ songs on the enclosed CD ROM that have a "hip-hop" beat.)



### **Lunchroom Link:**

Invite a staff member from your school foodservice program to talk about how they create balanced menus and determine the amount of each food to serve. (Have the students work with the lunchroom staff to plan a menu and then announce over the PA system when the menu is served, recognizing the students' efforts.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Food Math

**Jason is 9 years old. He's physically active sometimes. Each day, he needs to eat:**

**Grains**  
6 ounces

**Vegetables**  
2½ cups

**Fruit**  
1½ cups

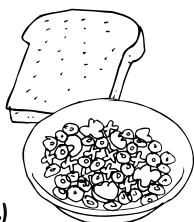
**Milk**  
3 cups

**Meat and Beans**  
5 ounces

Help Jason decide what to eat today. Plan breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack. Be sure he gets all the food he needs from each group. (Food items may be selected more than once.)

## Grains 6 ounces

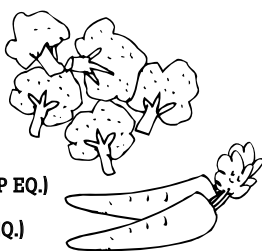
- \_\_\_ 1 slice whole-wheat toast\* (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 5 whole-wheat crackers\* (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 slice white bread (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 slice whole-wheat bread\* (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup whole-grain ready-to-eat breakfast cereal\* (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ ½ cup cooked brown rice\* (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup cooked pasta (2 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 hamburger bun (2 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 3 cups lowfat popcorn\* (1 OZ EQ.)



*Items marked with a \* are whole-grain*

## Vegetables 2½ cups

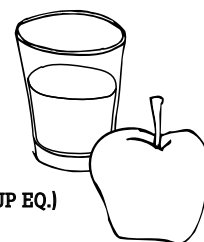
- \_\_\_ 6 baby carrots\* (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 large ear of corn (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 medium baked potato (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup cooked greens\* (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 large baked sweet potato\* (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 3 spears broccoli\* (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ ½ cup tomato juice (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup chopped lettuce (½ CUP EQ.)



*Items marked with a \* are dark green or orange vegetables*

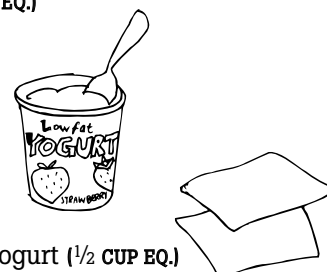
## Fruits 1½ cups

- \_\_\_ 1 small apple or ½ large apple (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 large orange (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 snack-sized container of peaches (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 large plum (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 small box raisins (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup 100% orange juice (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 medium wedge cantaloupe (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 small wedge watermelon (1 CUP EQ.)



## Milk 3 cups

- \_\_\_ ½ cup lowfat or fat-free cottage cheese (¼ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup fat-free milk (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 snack-sized lowfat or fat-free yogurt (½ CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 half-pint container 1% or 2% milk (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 2 ounces of lowfat or fat-free American cheese (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1½ ounces of lowfat or fat-free cheddar cheese (1 CUP EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1½ cups light ice cream (1 CUP EQ.)

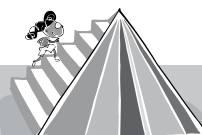


## Meat and Beans 5 ounces

- \_\_\_ 1 ounce of nuts (2 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 cup split pea soup (2 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 small chicken breast half (3 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 small lean hamburger (3 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 hard-boiled egg (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 tablespoon peanut butter (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ ¼ cup of pinto beans (1 OZ EQ.)
- \_\_\_ 1 slice of turkey (1 OZ EQ.)



*Key: (1 OZ EQ.) means (equals 1 ounce equivalent)*





# Lesson 3:

## Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits

### Lesson Highlights

#### Objective

##### Students will:

- Learn more about the nutritional qualities of fruits and vegetables.
- Brainstorm about ways they can increase their intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Set a goal of eating more fruits and vegetables and develop specific steps to reach their goal.

#### Curriculum Connections:

Language arts

#### Student Skills Developed:

- Thinking and analysis
- Writing
- Setting goals

#### Materials Needed:

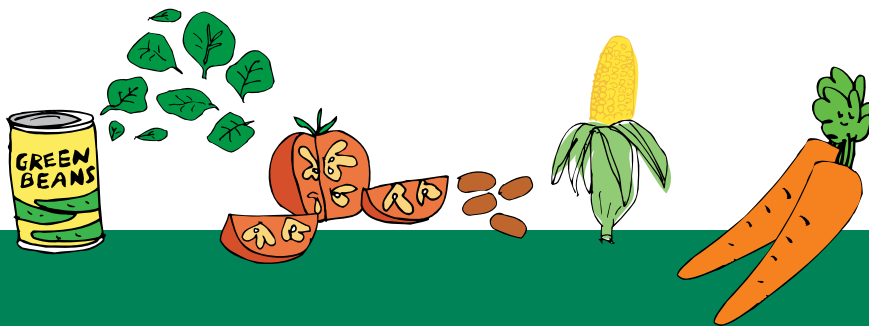
- *Steps to a Healthier You* worksheet for each student

### Activity: Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits

- Ask students if they eat fruits and vegetables every day.
- Ask them to name the fruits and vegetables they usually eat.
- Talk to students about the importance of fruits and vegetables. Eating fruits and vegetables can help them be healthy.
  - Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of many nutrients, including vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber.
  - Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and do not contain cholesterol.
  - Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
  - Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
  - Fiber keeps food moving through the digestive tract.
- Dark green and orange vegetables are important to eat. See if students can name some.
- French fries, which make up one-fourth of all vegetables eaten by elementary school students, are an exception. They are high in fat and calories. A medium order of fries has 460 calories, more than one-fourth the total daily calorie intake appropriate for most 8- and 9-year olds. A medium baked potato, however, has only about 100 calories.

### Now pass out the worksheet, *Steps to a Healthier You*.

- Have students review the goal of trying a new fruit and vegetable.
- Ask students what vegetables and fruits they already enjoy. Remember that dried, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables count, too.
- Have students complete the worksheet.
- Next, have students brainstorm some other ways they can eat more fruits and vegetables. Add these to their worksheet.
- Finally, complete the "Where and How" box.



Ask students to look at the worksheet to see which of the steps they could take to meet their goal of increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables. Have students circle on the worksheet the steps they plan to take. Point out that small changes really add up. Once they try a new food and like it, they can add it to the foods they eat regularly. That's how they can meet their goal.

*Note to teacher: Students may add additional ideas on the back of their worksheet.*

**As students learn about goal-setting, here are some points to remember:**

- Success breeds success. Encourage children to set goals they can accomplish. A child who usually chooses only corn and apple juice might set a goal of trying one new fruit this week.
- Take one step at a time. Children do not need to change overnight what they eat. They can start with one new, good thing, and add a new one every day.

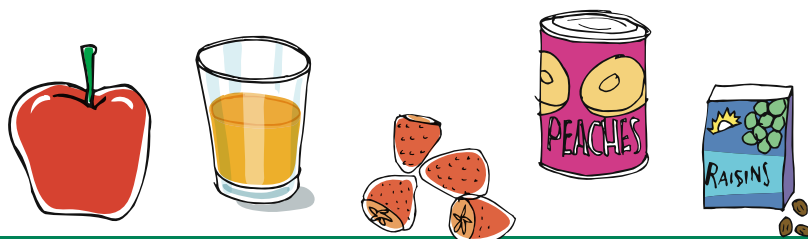
**Group Activity: Vegetable Ad Campaign**

Have students create an ad campaign for a vegetable. Working in groups, research a dark green or orange vegetable. (They can find information at [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov).) Why is it a nutritious choice? Have students use their creativity to create a poster and perhaps a TV ad – a jingle, a skit – that they can perform for the class.



**Lunchroom Link:**

Have students review the lunch menu to find out when dark green and orange vegetables are being served. Have them develop signs for the serving line to inform other students. Also, coordinate with the foodservice staff to offer a vegetable/fruit tasting party.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Steps to a Healthier You

## My Fruit and Vegetable Goals

### Fruits

Circle the names of the fruits you have eaten:

mango    papaya    kiwifruit    cantaloupe  
star fruit    pineapple    strawberry    blueberry

Other fruits I have eaten:

---

---

---

Write the name of a fruit you would like to try:

---

---

---

How will you eat this fruit? *(Perhaps on cereal, as a snack, for dessert, with dinner, or on pancakes.)*

---

---

---

### Vegetables

Circle the names of the vegetables you have eaten:

spinach    collard greens    sweet potato  
broccoli    jicama    zucchini squash

Other vegetables I have eaten:

---

---

---

Write the name of a vegetable you would like to try:

---

---

---

How will you eat this vegetable? *(Perhaps for a snack, as a salad, with dip, or for lunch.)*

---

---

---

### Where and How

I will try these foods by: asking my parents to purchase them, helping my parents prepare these foods, choosing them from a restaurant menu, eating them from the school lunch menu, or eating them at a friend's house.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

